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PLAIN FACTS;

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A REVIEW

OF THE

CONDUCT

OF THE

LATE MINISTERS.

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PLAIN FACTS,

&c.

ON the sudden secession or dismissal of any set of men from the government of the country, it is natural to take a retrospective survey of their ministerial acts, that we may ascertain, whether their removal ought to be matter of public congratulation or regret. It is also natural to enquire into the cause of their removal. The first question involves a vast variety of investigation, in which the talents and conduct of these men must necessarily be brought under discussion. The second question, which, in most cases, would be a mere matter of curiosity to be satisfied by a plain statement of facts, has, in the instance before us, derived uncommon importance from the circumstances which have attended it.

The late administration was the consequence of Mr. Pitt's death. When the

dissolution of that illustrious and ever-to-be-lamented statesman happened, his Majesty sent to Lord Grenville to take his advice on the formation of a new ministry. Lord Grenville, who, during Mr. Pitt's life, had separated himself from his former protector and colleague, and had stubbornly declined every invitation to return to office without the joint admission of Mr. Fox, it was not to be supposed would give up Mr. Fox, when the liberty of selection was at his disposal. Mr. Fox and his friends, after a violent opposition of two-and-twenty years, consequently came into power, and on such triumphant terms, that nearly the whole of the patronage of the state was surrendered into their hands. It will not easily be forgotten, how greedily their situations were in the first instance seized on, and with what little delicacy or discrimination, matters were subsequently managed. Officers, who had never been displaced before, were turned out without ceremony, to make room for fresh candidates; and such was the multitude and the earnestness of applications, that numbers were left unprovided for, and consequently un-

satisfied. Most of them were, however, gradually pacified by promises, and conceiving that this junto was firmly fixed in their dominion, they did not deem it prudent to espouse the cause of a feeble opposition. The country, indeed, confiding in the splendour of their talents, and still greater splendour of their promises, was disposed to overlook their avarice ; and, in the anticipation of future advantages, was willing to pardon actual inconvenience. Excuses were, in all quarters, gratuitously framed for them. It was natural, it was said, after so long and arduous a struggle for power, to be a little elated by its possession. It was natural, after such strong and unwearied proofs of attachment, to desire to reward the fidelity of friends. Much good was, nevertheless, to be expected from their exertions ; abuses were to be reformed, and systems either changed or amended. They had been the able advocates, and were, no doubt, the steadiest friends of popular freedom. They loved the constitution, as it was established at the revolution which placed William III. on the throne. They were not only men

of general information and unremitting activity, but they were sound politicians and enlightened statesmen ; and, above all, they concentrated in their persons, all the leading interests and distinguished talents of the state. This was the account which was also industriously circulated by themselves ; and the multitude, ever prone to novelty, gave credit to their assertions. Let us now, by the examination of facts, weigh their merits in the scales of impartiality, and ascertain in what degree they have corresponded with their own lofty professions, or with the nation's hopes.

The lust of lucre and of power, a submission to interest and to favoritism, combined with an obstinate adherence to a few of their original tenets, have been throughout their administration, their governing principles ; and to these principles have they, in many instances, most flagrantly sacrificed the essential interests of their country. On these principles they began their career ; on these principles it was continued ; and by these principles it has been terminated.

The first public effort of these gentle-

men, after their accession to power, was to get through parliament an act, enabling Lord Grenville to hold the auditorship of the exchequer, with the situation of first lord of the treasury, in which they succeeded, and by which his Lordship was appointed auditor of his *own* accounts. Their next public effort, in which they also succeeded, was to enable Lord Ellenborough, the chief justice of the King's Bench, to hold a seat in the cabinet, empowering his Lordship to hear *ex parte* evidence; to be prosecutor in his ministerial capacity in a case, which, in his judicial capacity, he might afterwards have to try ; and, consequently, to blend in the same person the irreconcilable characters of accuser, jury, and judge. Both these measures have been so amply discussed, in and out of parliament, and are, on the very face of them, such glaring violations of constitutional law, coming home so forcibly to every man's common sense, that it cannot be necessary to make any comment on them here. They are, however, alone quite sufficient to prove, how very differently the Foxites thought and felt, in and out of power. Had two

such measures, in former times, been only hinted at, these sturdy patriots would have reprobated them in the severest language, as the most dangerous and unjust encroachments on our most sacred rights, and would have sounded the alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other. But the moment that they could be converted to their personal advantage, the danger and the injustice vanished, and they received their most strenuous support. Such a sudden and total dereliction of former principles and professions, was sufficient to open every one's eyes as to their motives; and clearly explained, why they had been so clamorous in supporting what they denominated the unalienable rights of the people, when in opposition; and why they were so eager to surrender those rights, when in power.

These important points being settled, by which two of their leading men were rivetted to their interests, some time was taken up in subordinate official arrangements; in discarding old servants of the public, to make room for old friends of the party. Every office was absolutely ransacked; and such was the indiscrimi-

nate voracity of the candidates, that the most inferior stations were seized upon with the keenest avidity. So little delicacy, or even decorum, was displayed in many of these changes, that, in various instances, the credit of the administration was deeply disgraced. Even in the higher departments, the strangest anomalies were committed, and so many urgent claims were preferred from different quarters, that considerable confusion was every where apparent. Mr. Fox was so incessantly besieged by the numerous clan of his old and needy associates; so many obscure adventurers were petitioners to his bounty; that he is reported to have one day exclaimed, in the anguish of his heart, "What, in God's name, can I do more? we are already three in a bed." It was however, at last determined, among other *discreet* appointments, that Mr. Sheridan should be treasurer of the navy, and Mr. Davison treasurer of the ordnance; that Mr. Tierney, who had been tossed about like a shuttlecock from one party to the other, should be at the head of the board of controul; that the great seal of Scotland should be taken from the

Duke of Gordon, and consigned to the custody of the Earl of Lauderdale; that Mr. Erskine, who had scarcely ever been in the court of chancery, even as a visitor, should be appointed lord high chancellor; that General Fox, who had already received one of the most lucrative military appointments in the king's gift, should commence a diplomatic career, and supersede Mr. Elliot as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at the court of Palermo; that Mr. Singleton, Lord Cornwallis's son-in-law, and the only connection of that illustrious nobleman in the employ of government should make room, at the ordnance office, for Colonel Mac Mahon; and that George Hanger, in remuneration for his long and faithful services, should be gratified with a troop of horse artillery worth 1000*l.* per annum.

Scarcely were these arrangements gone through, when negotiations for peace were entered upon with France. The history of these negotiations has been before the public, and every one knows how strangely they were commenced, how strangely they were protracted, and how strangely they

were terminated. They fortunately did not lead to that worst of all consequences, a revolutionary peace ; but they as certainly, during the six months which they were entertained, by relaxing the exertions, were detrimental to the interests, of the country. Whether or no our ministers were duped by the artifices of Talleyrand, must continue matter of opinion ; but surely Talleyrand could have wished for no more advantageous result from his pretended desire of tranquillity, than the apathy which, during these tedious conferences, characterized the British government.

Buonaparte had already determined on his attack on Prussia. It was evidently, therefore, to him, an object of high importance, to conceal his design from us, and, by his assurances, to fortify the hope, which our Cabinet had so strangely conceived, and to which it so foolishly adhered—that peace was at hand. The constant ambiguity and prevarication of the French government, added to their eternal shifting from basis to basis, were, however, one should have thought, sufficient indications of the ultimate issue, and, many months

before the negotiations were broken off, would have opened the eyes of men, less infatuated in favour of *French* honesty, and less insensible to the dignity and the interests of their own country.

Blind and inert, however, as they were, Buonaparte's precipitate departure from Paris, with his confidential minister, the deep-plotting Talleyrand, leaving a very subordinate agent to adjust matters with the British ambassador, did begin to awaken suspicion in their breasts, and to present to their hitherto obscured optics, a glimmering outline of the scene which was speedily to ensue. The King of Prussia's fate was soon determined, and although it was certainly to be chiefly ascribed to his own obstinate folly, as well as to the treachery, cowardice, avarice, and stupidity, which prevailed in his cabinet and in his army; yet it must also be acknowledged, that our ministers, with the exertion of a little more foresight and diligence, a little more ingenuity and address, and a little more distrust of the views of the French government, might have procured that degree of information, and have re-

sorted to that mode of action, which might have paved the way to more fortunate circumstances. The Prussian monarch, destitute both of aid and of counsel, was at once overwhelmed, and, about a fortnight after the commencement of hostilities, we find him a fugitive in the eastern provinces of his dominions. Had it not been for the generous interposition of Russia, he was, beyond redemption, lost. It is, therefore, entirely to be attributed to the magnanimity of the Russian Emperor, sustained by the fidelity, the gallantry, and the genius of the officers, directing the intrepid valour of his troops, that the European Continent has been rescued from total subjugation. Buonaparte has found in Bennisen an adversary every way able to cope with him, and this novice in command, has hitherto, in every encounter, foiled his efforts, and eclipsed his military fame.

What, however, was the conduct of the late ministers at this awful and eventful epoch, which, during their continuance in office, was protracted through a period of nearly six months? What assistance did

they administer to the support of Russia? What measures did they adopt to conciliate the monarch of that powerful country; to stimulate him to a continuance of exertion; to prevent him from retiring from the contest in disgust? What did they do, to induce him to persevere in a struggle, which, cordially persisted in, may yet possibly restore Europe to law, religion, civilization and tranquillity; which may yet hurl the tyrants of France, Holland, and Naples, from the seat of usurpation and violence; and which may yet restore their thrones to the rightful owners? What, I ask, did they do, to effect this mighty purpose? What aid did they contribute towards the accomplishment of an object, which seemed once more attainable, and on which the happiness and tranquillity of the present race, and of future generations, so essentially depend? Did they provide men? Did they even provide money? Did they pursue any line of conduct which was likely to link in closer union the interests and views of the two empires? Grand expeditions were indeed talked of, and several thousand soldiers were,

for many weeks, detained on board of transports, from which they were disembarked and re-embarked, over and over again, to the great detriment of their health, and the great inconvenience of the service, independently of the enormous expence which was incurred. But, after all these delusive demonstrations, was a single man sent to that destination, where his presence was likely to be serviceable to the common cause? A large army of British troops was assembled in Sicily, but to what purpose; except to waste their time in inactivity, and to reflect some additional lustre on the insignificance of the court of Palermo? Whilst making this remark, I am as far as any man from being forgetful of the gallant achievements of our little army in Calabria, or of the transcendent merits of the officer to whom the command was entrusted. The battle of Maida has immortalized the memory of Sir John Stuart, and, as long as time shall last, has associated his name with every heroic virtue. But whilst I admire this brilliant exploit; whilst I participate in the joy, the glory, and the pride of it,

as sincerely as any inhabitant of these dominions ; I may be allowed to inquire, in what way it has been serviceable to us in a political point of view. It has, no doubt, afforded one additional confirmation of the opinion which we have always maintained, of the superiority of British over French troops. But this opportunity might have presented itself to greater advantage elsewhere ; and, in other respects, what have been its consequences ? Has it infused into the breasts of the Calabrians any additional spirit ? has it prevented their country from falling a prey to the usurper of the throne of Naples : or were there, at any period, reasonable grounds of expectation, that it would be attended with such effects ? Had this army, now swelled to 30,000 men, been landed at a seasonable time in the north of Germany, or the north of Italy ; or had it co-operated with the Russians in Dalmatia ; or had it, at such a moment as this, been thrown on the coast of Holland or Sweden ; or had it even been kept in England, to undertake, during the absence of the military strength of France, some daring enterprize against that coun-

try ; something might have been achieved, more worthy of their ardent and patriotic zeal, and more detrimental to the operations of an insatiable and implacable foe.

It is indeed altogether unaccountable, and betrays, either the most stupid ignorance, or the most unpardonable sloth, and will, no doubt, become a subject of parliamentary inquiry, that, during the six eventful months, which Buonaparte had been absent from France, after having completely drained it of regular troops ; that with the absolute and undisputed dominion of the seas ; that with the treasures and the strength of this powerful empire at their disposal ; no one enterprise should have been undertaken, or even thought of, hostile to that kingdom. Whilst Buonaparte was fighting with the *whole* of his military strength, at the distance of above a thousand miles from any part of the British islands, our late governors could not surely have been so very simple as to entertain fears of a sudden invasion ? Why then, in the name of common sense, was not some plan concerted, which, in all human probability,

would have been crowned with success. If indeed it had failed in its complete accomplishment, it could not have failed altogether. It would, at least, have occasioned a diversion in favour of our allies : it would have distracted Buonaparte's attention : it would have alarmed his fears : and, even in that way, must have been productive of consequences highly advantageous to the common cause. Had we wanted our troops back, our ships were always in readiness, and the loss which we were likely, even under partial disappointment to suffer, could never, by any sound politician, be placed in competition with the benefits which, in the event of full success, would have been indisputably insured. But our government seem to have totally forgotten one sound maxim in politics : that, without risk, no great achievement ~~can be~~ performed. So little did the boldness of enterprise mingle with their deliberations, that, during the thirteen months which they held the reins of empire, the strength and resources of the state were completely paralyzed, and Great Britain, with her mighty revenue, her

powerful armies, and her invincible fleets, accomplished little more than might have been expected from the puny exertions of some petty state.

If we extend our views to remote parts of the globe, nothing of a favourable complexion is still to be perceived ; nothing which is indicative of concert or of strength, or which stamps, even on failure, the mark of intellectual vigour. The Cape of Good Hope, which is the only post of any importance that has lately surrendered to our arms, was acquired in consequence of an expedition fitted out by their predecessors in office, and the value of which, from that very circumstance, was very unbecomingly depreciated by them. Sir Home Popham's expedition against Buenos Ayres, I certainly shall not attempt to vindicate. A court martial has pronounced judgment on its merits ; and although, if it could have been retained, it might have been rendered a valuable acquisition to this country, yet, unauthorized as it was by the government, and even unknown, it certainly, with such an inadequate force, must be allowed to partake of the character of a rash experi-

ment. But how happened it, that these gentlemen, until they heard of its loss, were so delighted with its capture; and that, in their joy at the intelligence of its possession, they overlooked the disobedience of orders by which it had been gained? How happened it, that, if they considered it as untenable, they encouraged our merchants and manufacturers to engage in commercial intercourse with; it and that, in their apparent zeal to promote this association of interests, they seemed almost to lose sight of the rancorous enmity with which they had uniformly pursued the gallant officer who had been the instrument of success. It is also a curious coincidence, that, whilst they were carrying on a prosecution against the obnoxious Sir Home Popham, who stood arraigned on a charge of disobedience of orders, their favourite Colonel Craufurd should have committed a similar act of indiscretion, by which several ships have, for a time, been lost to the naval service, and for which he will also, no doubt, by and by, be made accountable.

In the West Indies all has been yapid and still. No one event of import-

ance, either serviceable or injurious, has arisen. Nor has any thing, deserving of notice, occurred in the East Indies, except the unfortunate and melancholy business at Vellore, from all participation in which, I am happy in being able, completely to acquit the government at home.

The various diplomatic arrangements which took place, whilst they continued in power, next demand our attention. In these, the grossest errors were committed, and persons most unfit for the office were, in many instances, appointed. Among the leading characters, which they introduced into this line, was Lord Lauderdale, a nobleman certainly not very popular in this country, and who had been an early and professed admirer of that horrible revolution, which dissolved the privileged orders of society of which he is himself a member, and which has been the prolific source of those dreadful calamities with which Europe has, for the last seventeen years, been visited. If, however, he had not been a friend to his country, he had been a friend to the party ; and their gratitude deemed him worthy of reward. He was originally destined

for India, and had been nominated to the highest and most lucrative office in that distant part of the empire. The objections however to him were so insurmountable, on the side of the directors of the East India Company, whose approbation is necessary to confirm the choice of his Majesty's Ministers, that, after considerable altercation between the opposing parties, it was thought prudent to retreat from the struggle. In remuneration for this signal and mortifying disappointment, which must have conveyed to the mind of the noble lord no very flattering testimony of public esteem, he received as a sinecure the great seal of Scotland, and was afterwards pitched upon as a proper person to conduct the negotiation which had been opened with France. The Marquis of Douglas was, about the same time, appointed ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg. A perfect novice in politics, untrained to the duties of office, he could not be supposed to be in possession of any of those qualifications which, at a crisis like the present, ought to have recommended him to such a distinction. In this

country he was totally unknown, except as a person who had rendered himself ridiculous by aping, in his dress, the German costume. After loitering away his time for several months in England, in choosing his service of plate, and stocking his wardrobe, he, at length, set out for his destination ; and, during a residence of a few months at St. Petersburg, has contrived, completely to dissatisfy his own countrymen, and to disgust the court at which he is accredited.

Both our political and commercial connections with Russia have, indeed, been lately most lamentably neglected. Even the treaty of commerce which was concluded by Lord St. Helens a few years back, and which was so likely to perpetuate a friendly intercourse between the two empires, has been allowed to expire, without any provision having been effected for the protection of the British factories established in various parts of the Russian dominions. In consequence of this shameful omission, British merchants are now resident there, on the same footing as Russian subjects, the emperor, as a despo-

tic monarch, having it in his power to detain them, or to oppress them, as he shall think fit.* In this dilemma, they lately applied to Lord Douglas as the represen-

* In obedience to an *ukase*, issued on the 1st of January last, foreign merchants, not protected by any particular treaty, among other hardships, are subjected to the following. If they do not choose to become altogether Russian subjects, they must become foreign guests, in which capacity they are liable to a heavy tax on capital; they are amenable to the town laws; they must contribute their quota of the expences and burdens of the town in which they reside; they must dispose of particular articles of commerce to particular guilds; and they must, if required, submit their commercial concerns to the inspection of the magistrates. If they wish to quit the country, they must pay a tax of ten per cent. on computed capital, instead of three year's dues; and, in addition to this, by an old law of the country, which had become obsolete, but which is again to be enforced, the town magistracy has the power of levying a tax of ten per cent. on the amount of capital supposed to be taken out of the country, without any reference to that brought in, which tax must be paid before they can be discharged from their burghership. In case of death, ten per cent. is deducted from the property bequeathed to any relation or friend resident in other countries, and various other vexatious taxes on wills, and on the property of persons dying intestate are imposed. Whilst the treaty of commerce was in force, the British factory at St. Petersburg had the privilege of paying all duties, on exports and imports, in Russian coin: they are now obliged to pay in rix dollars of Holland, amounting to a difference of from ten to fifteen per cent. to their disadvantage. The only way of avoiding this, is to become a burgher.

tative of their country, and as their natural protector, to concert the plan which it would be most adviseable to pursue, to extricate them from their difficulties. To this end, it was judged expedient to draw up a statement of the grievances to which they were exposed, and to point out those privileges which they thought themselves justified in demanding. This paper was delivered to his Excellency, that he might be thoroughly acquainted with the situation to which they had been reduced by the neglect of their government; and, that he might be furnished with arguments which might be successfully urged in their favour. But what does this subtle politician do? Why this very paper, which contains many severe remarks on the Russian character, and on the constitutional rights of the Emperor, and which was submitted to him for his private inspection, that he might regulate his application by his own discretion, he presents to the Russian government*. The

* The memorial of the British factory at St. Petersburg to Lord Douglas, is dated 14th February 1807, and was presented on the 16th. It was accompanied with a letter of the

ministers were naturally surprised and offended; and thus has the misunderstanding been widened, and the difficulty of adjusting it, to the satisfaction of the parties, increased. If things should long continue in this state, that part of the com-

same date, containing a few additional observations, and concluding with this remarkable caution: "the freedom with which we have offered our sentiments, we trust, the conjuncture warrants. Where so much is at stake, and the danger so imminent for ourselves, our friends, and our country, a frank representation of what we fear as well as of what we feel, will surely be excused, not to say approved, by your Lordship, and by his Majesty's ministers in England. To them, therefore, we request the favour of its being transmitted, without delay, and without reserve. In the mean time, your Lordship will judge, how the suggestions it contains can be best employed to strengthen our cause at this court, fully aware, as your Lordship no doubt must be, of the extreme delicacy requisite in regard to committing either the factory or its deputies with a government, which as yet recognizes no right in any class, even of natives, to arraign the conduct of a minister, much less to discuss the mandate of a Sovereign."

After such a caution, what must have been the astonishment and alarm of the British factory, when, on the following day, February 17th, they received a letter from their Ambassador, beginning in these terms?

"Gentlemen,

"I will not, nor is it necessary to compliment you on the memorial I received yesterday, when I inform you, that I sent it to his Excellency General Budberg with a note of mine on the same subject." &c. &c.

merce which is most advantageous to Great Britain, will infallibly be forfeited. All our substantial merchants will withdraw as fast as they can wind up their concerns ; and the trade will be transferred to the management of a set of needy or desperate adventurers. To repair the mischief which has been produced, it is to be hoped that our present ministers will be able to prevail on Lord Levison Gower to take his immediate departure for St. Petersburg. His deep political knowledge, joined to his conciliating manners, and the personal favour with which the Emperor has already honoured him, may yet be able to remedy what has been done by the incapacity of our present representative, and to fortify the friendly intercourse which has so long existed, and which it is so important to the interests of both empires to preserve. This indeed is a moment at which Great Britain stands in peculiar need of a man of experience, moderation and address. It is very well known, and for reasons which I do not chuse to mention, that the French party at St. Petersburg, at the head of which is the dowager Empress, has lately

been gaining ground, and we must be aware how expert they are at intrigue, and how well they understand to turn any cause of coolness or dissatisfaction to their advantage. The Emperor, however, is fortunately alive to his interests, and may still be induced to combine them effectually with ours.

At the court of Vienna, a court which, however fallen in dignity, still prides itself on the antiquity of its nobility, the splendour of its appearance, and the forms of its ceremonial, the son of an army surgeon was commissioned to represent the dignity of the British nation. I shall not stop to inquire by what ties, either Mr. Adair or his father, were originally united to Mr. Fox's party ; but I know that Mr. Adair the son, some years back, during a serious difference pending between this country and Russia, was dispatched by Mr. Fox, as a kind of authorized agent from the opposition, to the Empress Catharine ; and that it was for this reason, that the present King of Sweden, when Mr. Adair was appointed to succeed Mr. Pierrepont, for which office, he was originally destined,

absolutely refused to receive him. He said that a man, who had taken a part against the interests of his own country for the promotion of party views, was an unfit person to reside, in a public character, at his court.

At Constantinople, Mr. Arbuthnot has been allowed to make a solitary opposition to Sebastiani, and five or six more active intelligent Frenchmen, who, by their intrigues, have completely overpowered the British influence in the Divan. Matters have been carried to extremities, and a rupture between the two countries has already taken place. When we consider the signal obligations by which the Porte was bound to Great Britain; the causes of distrust and irritation which naturally alienated it from France; this revolution in their political connexions, certainly bespeaks much mismanagement on our part. And at such a moment as the present, when it was so important to the cause of Europe, that Russia should be undisturbed on her southern frontier; and so important to ourselves, as a commercial nation, that no fresh commercial power

should range itself on the side of our enemies ; it is to be doubly regretted *.

* The energy which has lately been displayed by our fleet at Constantinople, if the force be adequate to secure the object in view, I must, in common with others, applaud. About the result we are still however anxious ; and, should we not succeed, the mischief will evidently be greater than if no attempt had been made. It must also be allowed, that, by previous good management, not only the losses, confusion, and alarm to which the commercial world has been subjected, might have been spared ; that the ships, detained before Constantinople, might have been wielding the weapons of destruction elsewhere ; and, above all, that the Russian army, which has been employed in overrunning European Turkey, might have been co-operating with their brethren against the foe of mankind, on the banks of the Vistula.

The capture of Monte Video is also an event which has diversified the uniformity of inaction. The service has been ably and gallantly performed. For this, however, we are indebted to our soldiers and sailors, who, under all circumstances, acquit themselves in a manner worthy of the national character. But what are we to say of a government, that sends out an expedition of this kind, to take a foreign settlement regularly fortified, and amply garrisoned, so insufficiently provided with gun-powder that, on the ninth day's siege, Admiral Stirling writes in his dispatch : " the defence made by the enemy protracted, the siege longer than was expected, and reduced our stock of powder so low, that the king's ships with all the transports and what a fleet of merchantmen had for sale, could not have furnished a further consumption for more than two days, when a practicable breach was fortunately made, and on the 3d instant, early in the morning, the town and citadel were most gallantly carried by storm."—(See Gazette, dated

Of infinitely higher importance however to ourselves, were our arrangements with America. But to render our views as liable to defeat as possible, Mr. Merry was recalled, and our interests were committed to the talents and discretion of one of Lord Erskine's sons, a young man without knowledge or experience, married to an American lady, and having a father who has invested, in the funds of the United States, the greatest part of his property, and who, before he was Chancellor, was in the habit of recommending all his clients, and all his friends, to settle there, as the only region of the globe where rational freedom could be enjoyed. Now on what principles of policy such an appointment could have taken place, I am at a loss to discover. Perhaps, indeed, it was considered prudent to make it perfectly agreeable to America, and to regard the in-

Downing-street, April 12th.) So that, had not a breach been *fortunately* made, or had the Spaniards held out *two days* longer, we must have inevitably been obliged to withdraw. This is a piece of information to which the public would of course never have had access, had our late wise ministers continued in office.

terests of Great Britain as of secondary moment. Certain it is, that concessions most unworthy of our honour, and most injurious to our interests, have already been submitted to. The navigation laws, which have, in the opinion of all the most eminent political writers, so long been the foundation and the support of our naval glory and our commercial prosperity, have already received a fatal blow: Our rights as a belligerent power to stop, to search, and to detain, neutral vessels, and to prevent them from becoming the carriers of the colonial property of our enemies, have been most unwisely surrendered, and by the new regulations which have been introduced into the maritime code in favour of the Americans, they, conjointly with the French, Spaniards, and Dutch, whom they assist, reap all the advantage, and we suffer all the inconvenience and the loss.*

* Since the American intercourse bill, a treaty has been agreed on between our government and the American minister in London, extending still further these injurious privileges. By this treaty, they are allowed openly to carry the colonial produce of France and Spain to the mother country, provided it is first taken to America, and pays to the American govern-

In the whole of our diplomatic system, there are, in truth, many radical and striking defects, to the existence of which our

ment a duty of two per cent, which is to be admitted as a proof of a change of property. In this manner will our *open* enemies, by the intervention of our *secret* enemies, receive the produce of their colonies at half the expence, at which we, as absolute masters of the sea, can receive ours. The trade of the East Indies is also to be thrown open to these commercial rivals. Such are the indulgences which we grant to America, in consequence of her insolence, ingratitude, and injustice towards us; and at a moment when she is exercising all her malevolence against our manufactures by her non-importation regulations. But what is still more surprising, and will scarcely be credited, so tender have our late ministers been of giving offence, so fearful of exciting American wrath, that not a word is mentioned in this treaty about our right to claim British sailors from American ships, which are known to contain many thousands of these brave and invaluable defenders of their country. Is not this silence a proof of a virtual abandonment of this important point? Is it not a proof that our government, subdued by a criminal pusillanimity, has been afraid to protect their countrymen, and to assert our unquestionable right on a subject which so vitally concerns us? Has not the American government naturally enough drawn this inference from our dastardly fears; and is it not said, notwithstanding the treaty is in every respect, where it is explanatory, so favourable to them, and so injurious to us, that, arguing from our meek submission on other points, and from the evident cowardice which our silence betrays on this, they now refuse to ratify the agreement *in toto*, unless we formally consent to this additional degradation? Fortunately for the interests of this country, America has now a firmer government to deal with.

being so frequently overreached by other courts is chiefly to be ascribed. These offices, of such material importance, are in general bestowed either as matter of favour to personal friends, or in consequence of parliamentary interest. It thus rarely happens that the persons appointed are regularly bred to the business which they undertake. When even a fit man, both in point of talents and rank, is placed at the head of an embassy, he is so unassisted in his labours, that whatever his diligence and activity may be, he cannot be expected to keep pace with the tribe of his opponents. The French missions, on the contrary, have not only uniformly an intelligent and enterprising person as a leader, but he is assisted by five or six subordinate agents, equally conversant in the management of affairs, mining and countermining, obtaining information, securing interests, and intriguing with success, wherever their talents can possibly penetrate. Supposing, therefore, that the chiefs of these separate missions should be completely on an equality, as to personal qualifications, we should still be outnum-

bered ; and this very circumstance must ever render the full success of our endeavours extremely hazardous. To the principal courts of Europe some person of high rank and consideration in the state, some person worthy of representing such a nation as this, should be sent, and under him should be placed several men of talents, information, and industry, acquainted with the manners, language, and politics of foreign countries. Men of this description, it is said, are with difficulty found. Such may be the case, as matters are at present managed ; but such men are in abundance, and although they might decline serving under the heads of our present legations ; yet if people of real distinction in the state could once be induced to take the lead, whose rank and character would reflect a lustre on all in employment under them, this objection would be removed. It is easy to conceive that a man of talents, experience, and even fortune, would think himself honoured in contributing his assistance under Lord Malmesbury, Lord St. Helens, or Lord Whitworth, who would

not submit to be tutored by Mr. Adair, Mr. Erskine, or Mr. Wynn.

In the conduct of our domestic concerns, two grand measures, one of military arrangement, the other of finance, chiefly attract our attention. On both of them, which indeed must ever be the case in matters that embrace such an extensive field of speculation, there is great contrariety of opinion. The former was, I fancy, the exclusive bantling of the late War Secretary, to whose department it belonged : the latter, which was the production of the aggregate skill of the cabinet, was merely introduced by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. With regard to the first plan, it is not surprizing that it should be characterised by a few peculiar features ; and that it should partake, in some degree, of the strange prejudices and obstinate absurdities of its speculative author. He, who had so long been talking of a plan, and boasting of his own superior skill in the contrivance of one, before he came into office, could not, with any degree of credit, decline the task, when his situation enabled him to exhibit what he

had promised to produce. So completely, however, was he puzzled, amid the intricacies of schemes and systems ; so completely blind or doubtful, as to the effects which they might respectively generate ; that he hesitated long before he redeemed his pledge ; and had he not been so jeered and goaded by his adversaries in parliament, he would no doubt have been very well satisfied to leave the matter at rest. A plan was, however, so frequently called for, that his reputation for ingenuity was at stake, and a plan it was necessary to bring forth. Whether it was a good one, or a bad one, was of little consequence, so as it was a plan ; so as it had something to distinguish it from that which had been with him a source of so much ridicule, and against which he had so furiously declaimed. After so long a pregnancy, even an abortion was better than nothing. Such I verily believe is the authentic history of its birth. Many of the provisions of this absurd, oppressive, and complicated production, the Right Honourable Gentleman never ventured to enforce ; and the nation is not now likely to be called

upon to obey them. The only clause in the bill of which I approved, was that which introduced recruiting for limited service, an experiment which I always considered as worthy of trial. But even this was pushed too far, and it might have been easily adopted, under particular limitations, without affecting a radical alteration in the constitution of our army. Mr. Pitt's bill, many parts of which were admirable, might have been partially amended, without being totally annulled ; and if Mr. Windham had been governed more by the sober spirit of rational inquiry, and less by the pride, the jealousy, and the irritable passions which reside in his breast, and which are constantly propelling him to some ridiculous or dangerous experiment, he might have more justly claimed the gratitude of his country. And what are we to say to his impolitic and illiberal treatment of the volunteers, men, who, whatever was their military skill, had come forward at a moment of unparalleled peril ; and who, at considerable expence and personal inconvenience, had offered to devote themselves to the service

of their country? How would the nations of antiquity have regarded their children thus disposed? How would the orators of antient Greece and Rome have commended their patriotism, have stimulated their zeal, and have celebrated their virtues? Is not, in modern times, America indebted to such bands for her independence, and, by the assistance of such bands, did not the republics of Holland, of Switzerland, and even of France, acquire and consolidate their power? Were these generous citizens then fit objects of selection for the exercise of the splenetic passions of a British senator? Were they a proper theme for the taunts and satire of his malignant tongue, for the sarcasms of ridicule, the severity of rebuke, and the bitterness of contempt? Let Mr. Windham recollect that every individual among these patriots has a country to which he is attached by every tie of affection, interest, and duty; and that he also possesses a soul as well able to appreciate, and better, perhaps, inclined to *appreciate properly*, the glorious distinctions by which his country is blessed, as that which ani-

mates the breast of the Right Honourable Gentleman. Had Bonaparte entertained the same opinions of the spirit and the use of the volunteers which Mr. Windham has so industriously circulated, he would long since have invaded this island, and, had he entertained them justly, he would long since have conquered it.* Let us hope that the present Administration may yet be able to repair the mischief which Mr. Windham has so indiscreetly occasioned.†

* Whilst making this remark, I am not ignorant of the great superior value of regular troops, nor am I at all disposed to depreciate that value; but there was a time when our regular army in England was reduced to a handful of men.

† But what, except mischief, could the most zealous among Mr. Windham's adherents expect from a man of his peculiar cast? From a man in whose breast no amiable or generous affection resides? Can this country ever forget his ingratitude to his friend and protector Mr. Pitt? Can any inhabitant of this country ever forget, that, on the motion in parliament for a public funeral in honour of this departed and illustrious statesman, Mr. Windham not only voted against it, but declared that during the seven years which he had acted with him in the cabinet, he had disapproved of the bulk of his measures, giving the public to understand, that he had conceded his opinions to preserve his place. Nor was this all. He not only voted himself, but he exerted all his unaccountable influence among his new friends to induce them to join with him in this act of barbarous animosity. Even the kind and generous nature of

Lord Henry Petty's financial scheme presents, it must be acknowledged, at first view less to object to than Mr. Windham's military scheme, and if it is as replete with errors, the outward features of it are certainly less repulsive. Assurances of the speedy diminution of the national debt open a cheering prospect to our contemplation, and the relief from additional taxes, even for one year, cannot be otherwise than palatable to all descriptions of people. All the sound parts, however, of Lord Henry Petty's plan have incontestably been raised on those foundations which were laid by his illustrious pre-

Mr. Fox was entrapped by his artifices. Who can, after this, ever allow to Mr. Windham any claim to the character of greatness? Who can, after this, ever admire, or love, or respect him? Envy, which corrodes every noble impulse of our nature, is the animating spring of his action, is the consuming passion which has degraded his talents, and frittered away his reputation. Mr. Windham has chivalry in his head, but not in his heart. He may resemble Don Quixote in selecting his object, and in planning his attack, but here the likeness ends. He has nothing of the kindness of temper, of the courtesy of demeanour, of the facility of disposition, which compensated for the fanciful extravagances of that renowned knight, and which make us excuse, in consideration of his many amiable and attractive qualities, the errors of a perverted judgment.

decessor, and the same main props and grand sub-divisions are every where visible. Mr. Pitt, who was, beyond all dispute, the greatest political arithmetician which this country, or indeed any other, ever produced, framed the entire ground-work of our financial prosperity; and although much improvement and additional precision may, no doubt, be still introduced into the innumerable ramifications of so extensive and intricate a system, yet any departure from the basis, or from the chief outlines, will, in proportion to the deviation, be found on experiment erroneous.

Notwithstanding the late Ministers, whilst in opposition, had been excessively vehement in depreciating the financial prosperity of the country, and in holding up our pecuniary resources to the public, as reposing on a very frail foundation, yet when they came into power, they were, in their own defence, compelled to do justice to Mr. Pitt's fame, and to acknowledge their stability.

It was still, however, a great object of ambition with Lord Henry Petty, and a very laudable ambition it would have been, had he not endeavoured to feed it

by detracting from the superior merits of another, to surpass Mr. Pitt in that branch of political economy, for the management of which he was so eminently celebrated. The sinking fund and the war taxes, measures which Mr. Pitt originated, and which formed the substantial basis of his financial system, it was judged dangerous to remove. Considerable innovations were however made in other respects, and much legerdemain was practised to induce the nation to believe what it nevertheless continues to doubt. Lord Henry Petty, misled perhaps by others, with the fervour of a young and inexperienced mind, imagined that a mode of liquidating the public debt had been discovered, which would throw Mr. Pitt's calculations completely in the shade, and create for himself an unclouded and immortal reputation. That his prognostications might derive importance from the space of time which they occupied, he predicted all that was to happen for twenty years to come; little reflecting, that any man who, in this mysterious age, pretends to forecast the events of such a lengthened

period, must, to a moral certainty, be wrong. The data on which he builds his system, being governed by contingent circumstances, must with those circumstances infallibly vary. What, in fact, can be more absurd, than to imagine that our trade will for the next twenty years remain at its present extent, when we know, that the unexampled prosperity which it has reached, is, in a great degree, occasioned by the peculiar circumstances of a war, which has expelled all our old commercial rivals from the field of competition? Yet on suppositions such as this depends the solidity of his Lordship's expectations. In order also to make it look prettier on paper, he has omitted placing on the debit side, foreign subsidies, and army extraordinary, two enormous drains, which must unavoidably be felt as long as the war continues. He also, by the trick of his supplementary loans, borrows from one fund what he redeems in another, and under this striking disadvantage, that he borrows at compound interest. Lord Henry Petty's promises are then a mere delusion; for what is paid into one hand is

taken from the other, and the application of one fund to the discharge of another can only occasion the introduction of error and confusion. Even the exoneration from taxes is not entitled to that general approbation which the feelings of those individuals who, delighted with immediate benefits, disregard future evils, have led them to bestow. It has at least been so far premature, that if, after all, our situation should require additional burdens, they will now be granted with much additional reluctance. By the sudden change in the administration, his Lordship will escape the odium, but he will have been the sole cause of the mischief. So very flimsy and inaccurate have been his calculations; so foolishly desirous has he shewn himself of holding out to the nation false hopes, that even in the few weeks which intervened, between the submission of his plan, and the opening of his budget, he discovered the necessity of adding 3,000,000 to the 12,200,000 which he had confidently declared would be adequate to the exigencies of the Exchequer. But he was

in quest of popularity, and he wanted to give some convincing proof to the nation, that the grasp of his comprehension left his predecessor far behind. He was thus resolved, at all events, to risk the experiment, and he determined that the country, should for one year at least, be exonerated from taxes. A bold and wise statesman would, on the contrary, have proceeded in his task, ungracious as it was, and would manfully have continued the burden till he could have relieved with certainty. If he erred, he would have erred with safety, inasmuch as it is far better to continue a burden than to renew it after a temporary remission; and when it became prudent to remove it altogether, the accumulation of the overplus would have proportionably increased the benefit.

I now come to a very important part of this discussion, viz. the cause which immediately occasioned the late ministerial revolution. It has been, on both sides, a good deal misrepresented by party zeal. On one side, much of the truth has been suppressed; on the other, it has been somewhat exaggerated. It is, however,

particularly interesting to the British public, that the question should be fairly before them, and that the King's character, which, in many instances, has been so freely handled, and in some so grossly reviled, should be vindicated by a plain statement of the facts as they arose.

It had, avowedly, been long in the contemplation of his Majesty's late Ministers, to enlarge the privileges of the Irish Catholics. Lord Grenville had himself, in the month of April 1805, pleaded their cause in the House of Peers, and he had been powerfully assisted in his object by his late colleagues in both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville entertained, on this point, similar sentiments, and it is well known, that, in the year 1801, they, with several other leading characters, resigned the administration of public affairs, in consequence of the decided opposition which they met with in the highest quarter, and which created an impossibility of carrying their measure into execution. When the administration of Lord Sidmouth was dissolved, Mr. Pitt was again called to the councils of

his sovereign, and his great and generous soul, which was ever ready to submit to personal sacrifices for the good of his country, easily devised a mode of reconciling the suspension of his private opinion with the discharge of his public duty. In the memorable debate which took place on this interesting topic, it was explicitly declared, both by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, that no pledge had been given by them to the Catholics ; so that they both stood completely absolved from any charge of inconsistency, in accepting, at different periods, the offer which was made to them of a return to power. Whilst Mr. Pitt lived, the Catholics made no further application, either to Parliament, or to the Administration, and seemed patiently to acquiesce in the decided judgment, which had been pronounced by two branches of the Legislature, on the merits of their petition. When Mr. Fox came into office, the question was again agitated, but, aware of the insurmountable obstacle which existed, his discretion deterred him from risking a removal, and he easily persuaded the leading men among the Catholics to

desist. On Mr. Fox's death, the consequence of his party, as distinguished from the Grenvilles, was completely eclipsed, and Lord Grenville became, what Mr. Fox had been, the paramount chief. The reserve which Mr. Fox's decided ascendancy and predominant genius had commanded from the inferior talents of his friends ; that humble deference with which his adherents bowed to his opinions, being removed ; the hopes of the Catholics revived, and their zeal again became active. They were well acquainted with Lord Grenville's private sentiments, and they naturally suspected, that if, through the medium of the other members of the Cabinet, they could induce him again to bring forward the measure, they should have some chance of overpowering the reluctance of the King. Strong representations were accordingly made by them to the government in Ireland, which, through his Majesty's Ministers there, were forwarded to the Cabinet in London. A correspondence immediately commenced, in which the policy of the measure, having been fully canvassed, they at length

agreed on the propriety of pointing out to the King their opinion of the necessity of granting further indulgences to his Irish Roman Catholic subjects. Pursuant to their decision, this unpleasant business was forthwith opened to his Majesty, who, after much argument and solicitation, consented to extend the operation of the Irish act of 1793 * to the other parts of his European empire. But this consent was not obtained without difficulty, and he concluded the conference by saying, that he gave it with reluctance, and that no consideration should induce him to go a step farther. This assurance was sufficiently positive, and their instructions were sufficiently distinct; nor, after such an explanation, was it well possible for any mistake to arise. Intelligence of this arrangement was immediately transmitted to Ireland; but it was couched in such ambiguous terms, that neither the Duke of Bedford, nor Mr. Elliot, nor the Catholics to

* The Irish act of 1793 enables Irish Roman Catholics to hold commissions in the army, in Ireland, as high as the rank of general, but does not allow them to be on the staff.

whom it was shewn, could comprehend it. We naturally stop here, to inquire, what could have been the reason of such a want of precision in so important a document? The King's declaration admitted of no misconstruction; nor did Lord Sidmouth, Lord Erskine, or Lord Ellenborough, entertain the remotest doubt respecting its interpretation. They were all along convinced, that his Majesty never intended to go beyond the act of 1793. Was there any difficulty in explaining this to the Irish government, or were Lord Grenville, and Lord Howick, poor simple men! so totally ignorant of the import of words, as to be unable to state, in intelligible language, so clear a proposition? Yet, had they *designed* to be explicit, such would have been the inference. In consequence, however, of this unaccountable want of perspicuity, the Catholics inquired of Mr. Elliot, whether *all the commissions* in the army and navy were to be thrown open to them. Mr. Elliot doubted; and, fearful of committing himself by giving a positive opinion on the subject, he wrote to England for instructions.

This dispatch from Mr. Elliot, it must be allowed, was no unimportant communication. It suggested no trifling departure from the arrangement which had been positively agreed on, between the King and his Ministers, and to which his Majesty had given his *reluctant* consent, coupling it with a declaration, that *no consideration should induce him to go a step farther*. Ministers, who entertained a proper respect for the opinions and the feelings of their Sovereign, and who were desirous to avoid those inconveniences which must arise to public business, in consequence of misconception on great legislative questions, would naturally, before they replied to this dispatch, have been very anxious for a personal interview with the King, in order precisely to ascertain his sentiments respecting it. In this state of the case, I say, if the Ministers (who are also termed, the King's *confidential servants*) in consequence of further deliberations in the Cabinet, founded on this dispatch, had conceived further concessions prudent, it was indisputably their bounden duty, to make his Majesty instantly acquainted with their

opinions, and to ascertain, before any steps were taken in Parliament, whether the royal compliance could be secured. So firmly convinced, however, were they of the contrary, that they deemed it best not to consult him at all, but to take their chance, when they had hurried the measure through the Commons and the Lords, of forcibly overpowering the King's scruples, and, by the necessity of the case, compelling his consent.

To accomplish this design a great deal of contrivance being requisite, the following plan was resorted to, as most likely to insure success. It was agreed to send Mr. Elliot's dispatch to the King, unaccompanied by any comment or notification, such as is usually attached to papers of importance, to spare his Majesty time and unnecessary trouble, by at once informing him of the substance, and directing his attention to those particular passages which most require it. If the observation of this general rule be requisite on any occasion, it was surely peculiarly so on this, not only from the intrinsic importance of the dispatch, but also from their previous knowledge of the

King's opinion respecting its contents. It was, notwithstanding, conveyed to him at Windsor, in one of the usual boxes, without any reference whatever. His Majesty of course considered it, as mere matter of form, as a document with the contents of which he was already acquainted, and to which he had agreed; and which, not requiring his perusal, he returned it without having opened it, consequently without observation.

Now, if the omission of this usually accompanying comment had been unintentional; if it had arisen from a casual oversight committed in the hurry of business; the total silence of the King was quite sufficient, not only to excite surprise, not only to awaken suspicion that some mistake had happened, but to create an anxiety to rectify it by a personal interview. Instead, however, of being influenced by these considerations, they do not allow themselves to entertain a doubt on the subject, but instantly interpret the total silence, on the part of his Majesty, into an unqualified consent. Having brought the affair to this stage, they no longer think it necessary to

write to Ireland in *equivocal* terms; and, in their second dispatch, they inform the Lord Lieutenant, that *all commissions* in the army and navy are to be thrown open to the Roman Catholics.

Preparations were, at the same time, made to bring forward a measure in Parliament to this effect. Before this was done, however, it was thought prudent to wait till the King came to town. This happened in a day or two; and his Majesty, in an interview which he had with Lord Howick, continuing silent on the subject, and Lord Howick cautiously avoiding it, his Lordship's opinion of his Majesty's acquiescence was confirmed, and he determined to proceed. In Lord Howick's original notice on this subject, he mentions it as a corollary to the Mutiny Bill, with a view of extending the operation of the Irish act of 1793 to this country, and of enlarging its benefits; but some objection being started to the mode, he afterwards introduced it as a separate bill. All this time not a word was hinted about his proceedings to his Majesty, nor were the three dissentient Members of the Cabinet consulted. The

King came to town the following week, when he again saw Lord Howick ; and on asking him what was going on in the House of Commons, his Lordship answered, that the second reading of the bill in question was to come on that day. His Majesty immediately inquired, if it was the same as the Irish bill, and, on being informed of the additional provisions which it contained, he expressed his disapprobation. Finding, however, that this manifestation of his displeasure was insufficient to deter Lord Howick from proceeding with his bill, he, at length, communicated to Lord Grenville his decided objection. On this, the bill was necessarily suspended ; and consultations being held among the Ministers, they at first attempted to modify it ; but finding that impracticable, or at least incompatible with their design, they resolved to withdraw it altogether.

Here the matter might have rested, or had they thought proper to introduce a new bill, conformable to the conditions on which his Majesty had originally agreed to grant his consent, that consent would still have been granted. But this was not enough to

satisfy their lofty minds. They had already declared their pretensions, and were resolved still to look forward to an opportunity of forcing the King to obedience. They not only had this in contemplation, but, relying on their strength, they thought they might safely venture to declare it. They accordingly drew up a cabinet minute, in justification of their conduct, and “ they further insisted, that their present deference to his Majesty might not be understood as restraining them from submitting, for his Majesty’s decision, such measures as circumstances might require, respecting the state of Ireland.” They also claimed the right of supporting, by their votes and speeches in Parliament, the pretensions of the Irish Roman Catholics, whenever their petition should be presented. The gauntlet of defiance was now thrown down, and the declaration of hostility was sufficiently explicit. They not only tell their Sovereign, that they are, on this point, determined to oppose his opinions, and to disregard his comfort and ease of mind, but that they will select the time, and frame the measure, as they judge most

expedient. From this moment, that confidence, which should always exist between the King and his Ministers, and without which, indeed, public business cannot be advantageously carried on, must have been destroyed, and it was their duty to resign. This is what liberal and constitutional men would have instantly done. But they, blinded by interest, did not see the affair in this light. They liked their places, and were resolved, if possible, to retain them, in the King's despatch. So extreme indeed was his Majesty's moderation and forbearance, that, great as the provocation was, he was inclined to pass it over, and he intimated no desire that they should quit his service. But, after the conduct which they had pursued, and the menaces which they had uttered, it did seem necessary, in order to prevent the recurrence of a similar affront, and to secure to him his peace of mind on a point of conscience which he was determined never to surrender, to require a written pledge, that they would no more disturb his repose by the agitation of this unpleasant question. This they indignantly refused to give, when his Ma-

jesty found himself obliged to take measures for forming a new administration, and, in a few days, they were required to deliver up the seals of office. Such is the history of this singular transaction, as faithfully as I have been able to collect it from the various relations of it which have been publicly made.

Much pains have been taken by the partizans of the late administration to palliate their conduct, in this strange affair, at the King's expence; but surely nothing could well be more aggravating and insulting than their offence, or more natural and just than the King's determination.

Why indeed they should have selected this particular moment, again to bring forward the Catholic question, is quite unaccountable. They were aware that it could not, by any fair proceeding, be settled to their satisfaction. They knew, that, in addition to the decided opposition of the King, it would have to encounter the spirit of the times. The object was, consequently, unattainable; and all that was likely to result from the attempt, was to stir up ill blood between England and

Ireland, and to scatter among the Irish the seeds of discontent.

In all governments, certain fixed principles must form the basis on which the other parts of the constitution repose; and although, from the fallacy of human reason, and the defects which must ever attend on every human work, these principles should not be immoveable, yet should they not be lightly disturbed. Experiments, no doubt, frequently lead to useful discoveries. They are indeed the foundation of our most valuable knowledge. But in the choice of experiments, there is a boundless field for the exercise of judgment; and from a neglect of this most useful power of the understanding, many men, and many states, have been irrevocably ruined. But of all experiments, those on government, as they may be pregnant with the most serious mischief, demand the most cautious investigation. People, in their reasonings upon legislation, are nevertheless frequently led into the strangest absurdities, and the most incoherent conclusions; nor can any thing be more fluctuating than their principles,

or more delusive than their hopes. This is easily accounted for; for what appears wise in speculation, frequently proves defective when we come to apply it; and what is theoretically perfect, we often discover to be practically absurd.

The question immediately under our consideration, has been divided by some into two heads, viz. as matter of right, and as matter of expediency. I never could perceive the necessity, nor the policy of the distinction. The two terms are, in this instance, blended in signification. A measure of this nature can only be *right*, as far as it is *expedient*; that is, as far as it is consonant with the general welfare of the state. Private advantage must yield to the benefit of the community: the privileges of individuals must be regulated by public good. This is the scale which must, in all cases, be consulted. What, in fact, is all legitimate power, but an aggregate fund derived from the natural rights of every individual member of society, and which is the price which social man pays out of the stock of his natural liberty, for the protection which the laws afford him?

The only mode, therefore, in my judgment, in which this question can be agitated with utility or with safety, is to endeavour so to contrive, that, if ever the concessions, which the Catholics require, should be made, they should be the result of conviction, and not of violence, faction, or intrigue. Some people have said: Grant this as a boon to the Irish Catholics, and you make them your friends; withhold it, and you make them your enemies. This is presumptuous, and, I trust, erroneous language; and those who use it, whatever they may pretend to be, are no real friends to the cause which they espouse. They would extort by compulsion as a right, instead of obtaining with good will as a gratuity. They would put the issue on the strength of the suitor, and not on the justice of his claim. They would make it a question of blood, instead of a question of reason. But lamentably weak would that government be, which could be induced to yield from such a motive; and I have no hesitation in saying, that if such a daring and unconstitutional spirit should really betray itself, as long as it existed, it should

never be listened to. If the Catholics should ever begin stipulating for terms; if they should ever mete out loyalty by way of bargain; if they should ever threaten, that they will only remain conditionally faithful to that government which they are bound, not only by allegiance, but by every tie of interest and affection, to support; they will then have proclaimed themselves as our enemies; and if concessions were submitted to in consequence of such a demeanour, the Catholics would be triumphant, and the Protestants subdued. But that such traitorous sentiments are neither cherished nor entertained by the Catholics, I am fully persuaded; and that they should have been broached by their pretended friends, bespeaks, on the part of of such advocates, neither desire of conciliation, nor sobriety of argument, nor attachment to their country.

Without entering into unnecessary argument, respecting the superior merits of any particular church, we know, from all experience, that any religion is better than none. We also know, that in most countries, out of the endless variety, one has

generally been selected, to which a decided preference has been given by the state, by providing for its ministers, in a manner suitable to the opulence of the country, and the sanctity of the institution. Religion, however, of whatever description, exercises a powerful influence over the moral conduct of the world, and mingles with almost every affection of the heart, and every duty of life. It thus naturally connects itself with the civil government, for civil laws are best supported by morality, and morality derives its chief security from a proper deference to religion. Hence in all communities the close association between church and state. Most fortunate, however, is that country, in which religion is founded on just and liberal views ; for in that country, industry, liberty, toleration, good morals, and every virtue, which leads to the true happiness and prosperity of society, is most likely to flourish.

When, in this country, catholicism was the creed of the national church, the weight of its power was every where felt. That unbounded authority which it assumed, and which it enforced by such cruel and

arbitrary means, contributed, more than any other cause, to stifle the energies of the soul ; to check the spirit of inquiry ; and to retard the progress of industry, science, and freedom. The Reformation, although it had been long silently working its way, and removing, with the implements of reason, the weeds and brambles which choaked up the road to knowledge, was nevertheless produced before its time. The separation of England from the church of Rome was less the effect of moral conviction, than of the whimsical and headstrong passions, which dictated to the resolves of one of the most odious tyrants that ever swayed the sceptre of these realms. At that time, however, the Anglican church arose, of which the king became the declared head ; and notwithstanding the circumstances which attended its origin, the close connexion between church and state, which has since prevailed (a short period excepted) has essentially contributed to the security of the ecclesiastical and civil establishments of the country. The struggles, however, which the Catholics made in the time of Eliza-

beth, and particularly in the time of the Stuarts, for the restoration of their faith, naturally created jealousy on the part of the Protestants, and in 1678 a test act was passed, which excluded from Parliament Catholic peers. At the glorious revolution of 1688, this restriction was continued, and it was a principal object, amidst the arduous labours of the many illustrious statesmen, who, at that fortunate and ever memorable era, led the public mind, for ever to prevent their return. They had observed, how closely the tenets of the church of Rome were linked with the exercise and maintenance of arbitrary power, and how much the safety of a free constitution depended on their exclusion from all participation, in the enactment or the execution of its laws. As an additional rampart for the protection of civil liberty, these enlightened and patriotic statesmen unalterably regulated the royal line of succession, and secured the inheritance of the crown to a race of Protestant princes. The tests of the two preceding reigns were, at the same time, further fortified, and the church and state were, by several solemn

acts, indissolubly united. Many other penal and disabling statutes were passed against the Catholics in the succeeding reigns, and it was only at the accession of his present Majesty to the throne, that the Government began to view them with less distrust. They have felt the full benefit of this favourable disposition. The penal laws against them have been gradually abrogated; their disabilities have been gradually rescinded; and they have been gradually restored to the enjoyment of religious toleration, of civil right, and of personal freedom. Every odious and burthensome restriction being thus removed, both the reason and justice of the case, as it applies to further concession, seems now to be reduced to a simple question of expedience and prudence. Some assert, that we might grant the full extent of their claims without any risk: others contend, that it would be attended with the greatest. When there is such a wide difference of opinion; when such contrary inferences are deduced from the same premises, and by persons of equally liberal views, and of equally extensive experience;

it is, at least, a proof of the difficulty of deciding right. This is a strong argument for continuing as we are. We know what our present situation is : it is difficult to foretell what it might be. We know the advantages of a Protestant church : we have every reason to dread the predominance of catholicism. The Catholics must, indeed, themselves, be fully sensible of the difficulties with which this question is encumbered. They must be aware, that, interfering as it does with some of the fundamental principles of the constitution, it involves considerations of peculiar delicacy and magnitude ; and that, above all, the wishes and prejudices of the Protestants, who make four-fifths of the aggregate population of our European empire, must, on a point which so nearly concerns them, be indispensably consulted.

After all, every independent government, in the appointment of its officers, possesses an indisputable right to require that form of oath which it deems necessary to its perpetuation, and to oblige every one, who aspires at the administration of its affairs, to take it, previously to his in-

vestiture of office. As in other countries, particular forms have been settled, so has one in this, by which all descriptions and ranks of people, in certain public situations, are equally bound. Is not the king himself, when he ascends the throne of his ancestors, obliged to take an oath, that he will govern according to law? Is he not equally obliged to be a Protestant; to marry a Protestant; to train up his children in the Protestant faith; and to entrust the management of public affairs to Protestant ministers? These fundamental laws of the constitution, may, by some, be considered as harsh restraints; and some future king may wish to be relieved from them; but where is the man to be found, who would be hardy enough to propose an obedience to his wishes? They are, in part, the price which he pays for the crown which he wears; the power and patronage which he possesses; the privileges which he enjoys; and the allegiance which he claims. They are a part of the security which we, as his subjects, exact; and which entitles him, in return, to our loyalty and support. That Henry the

Fourth of France should have had his Sully, or the late King of France. his Necker, is quite irrelevant to the purpose. We have nothing to do with foreign maxims or foreign laws. Our great object is to watch over the preservation of our own.

We must therefore, at all events, in this very delicate and momentous affair, advance with caution. Unless such a measure as the Catholics seek to obtain, arise out of a thorough conviction of its utility among all parties, it cannot be attended either with salutary, or with safe consequences. By conciliatory, moderate, and progressive steps, the fears and evident repugnance of the Protestants may be insensibly diminished. But if any thing like violence or compulsion be attempted, those fears will be augmented, and that repugnance will be rendered invincible. The recollection of papal power, and of papal arrogance, with all those direful events which they produced, must indeed be expected to act as an unceasing spur to our vigilance ; and must ever make us regard the encroachments of the Catholic church with jealousy and alarm. The uncondi-

tional emancipation, indeed, at which the Catholics avowedly aim, can **never** meet the approbation of a Protestant church, nor indeed of any description of people who have a guarded attachment to the constitution of this country. Those parts of the tests which militate most directly against the leading tenets of the Roman Catholic faith, as contra-distinguished from papacy, might possibly, at some future period, be softened, or even abandoned altogether; but the supremacy of the King will, I hope, be ever maintained. I also hope, that the direction, which the Parliament possesses over religious concerns, will be never surrendered; and that no member of the British Senate will ever **be** allowed to permit the authority of the pope to direct his conscience, or that, **when** religious matters are the subject **of** debate, he will ever be allowed, under any pretence whatever, to apply to the conclave at Rome how to act.

From the foregoing pages, in which I have endeavoured to compress this very important subject as much as possible, it is very evident that the King, in refusing

his consent to the demands of the catholics, as recently proposed to him through his Ministers, has not only exercised his just prerogative, but that he has exercised it in a manner which is congenial to the almost unanimous wishes of his protestant subjects, as but two years ago solemnly declared, and strictly conformable to the fundamental laws of the constitution. He is bound by his coronation oath to support the Protestant church, and if he is not concerned in the interpretation of that oath, who is? If then his Majesty, in his conscience, thinks that any further indulgence to the Roman Catholics, would materially shake the interests of that church, of which he is the guardian and the head; or that it would amount to a violation of that oath by which he holds his crown; what Minister is not bound to respect such a conclusion? The oaths of abjuration and supremacy are, indeed, constituent parts of the bill of rights, in which they were inserted by the Convention Parliament, as bulwarks necessary for the defence of the privileges of the people against the encroachments of the crown, and against the

return of a Roman Catholic jurisdiction. Is then the King to be blamed, for refusing to grant what would amount to a renunciation of the fundamental laws of the realm, and what, had it been proposed in the time of William III. would have been matter of impeachment? Is the King to be placed so completely at the mercy of his Ministers; is he to be so completely tied up in the trammels of non-resistance, that he is, on no occasion, to venture an opinion of his own? Suppose that his Ministers had counselled the abolition of the trial by jury; will any one venture to say that he would have been still bound to yield? How then is this system of compliance to be stopped, but by the exercise of the King's judgment? Would we wish him to imitate James II. instead of William III., or is our history so silent on the evils arising out of contentions between the King and his Paliament, that we should be indifferent about their revival? * I must, there-

* It has been said, that the language of these times is widely different from that which was holden in the days of William III. It certainly is, for such language in his days would, as I have observed above, have been impeachable. It has been also

fore, insist, that, in whatever point of view the schism between the King and his late Ministers is envisaged, his Majesty has acted in a manner every way worthy of his exalted rank, every way worthy of his dignity, as the constitutional King of a free country ; and that he has afforded an additional proof, if any were wanting, of his sacred regard for his public duties, and of the watchful zeal and tenderness with which he has ever contemplated the general interests of his empire.

Much unnecessary trouble has nevertheless been taken, to prove what no one can deny, and much argument has

said, that William the Third's Ministers were in the habit of giving him advice which was personally disagreeable to him, particularly in what concerned the dismissal of his Dutch guards. As far as the *disagreeableness* of the advice goes, our late Ministers have certainly not fallen short of the laudable precedent established above a century ago. In other respects, they have far surpassed the merits of their ancestors. William the Third's Ministers might with impunity *advise* him to dismiss his Dutch guards ; but had they threatened to bring in a bill to Parliament to *compel* him to dismiss his Dutch guards, would he not have *dismissed* them ? Had the late Ministers only given their *advice*, they might have kept their places. William was indeed obliged to dismiss his Dutch guards, but it was in consequence of a resolution of the House of Commons, in which his Ministers took no part.

been introduced which is totally inapplicable to the subject. It has been asserted, that the conduct of the Ministers is to be justified, because they could not, consistently with their ministerial oath, consent to give that pledge which the King required from them, as the condition of their continuance in office. It has also been argued, that if the King insists on stipulations with his Ministers, by which they consent to fetter, or suppress their opinions, relative to particular points of domestic policy, or of the general administration of the laws, he makes an improper use of his prerogative, and, by taking a responsibility on himself which the constitution does not acknowledge, he materially weakens the safeguards of popular freedom. From this maxim, as a general principle, or as an abstract proposition, no one, who understands our government, can possibly dissent. It is a political axiom which admits of no doubt. But there are exceptions to all general rules, and particular cases may occur, for which the law has not provided, and in which the King may be justified in acting against the usual in-

terpretation of those maxims, which custom has wisely established, and to which the legislature expects to defer. Although the King, by his prerogative, can put his negative on any bill which has passed through the Houses of Parliament, yet the spirit of the constitution, in most cases, not only requires him to consult the other two branches of the legislature, but to obey their recommendations. And, indeed, it very seldom can happen, that there should, on this point, be difference of opinion, or opposition of interest. But still cases may be imagined to arise, in which it is necessary for the King, for the preservation of his own authority, to exercise his own judgment. The question before us does not, however, go to that length. Ministers had expressed *their* opinion, but the Parliament had expressed *none* ; and it surely can be interpreted into no improper interference on the part of the King, in a measure which was so peculiarly obnoxious to him, and in which he was so personally concerned, to prevent his Ministers, who, whilst in that capacity, are supposed to act in union with him, from proceeding fur-

ther.* But how has his Majesty interfered with the rights of individuals, or the privileges of Parliament? He has not prevented Lord Grenville or Lord Howick, or any other member, from bringing forward any measure which they may deem proper: he has only prevented them from bringing forward as his Ministers what he could not, in his conscience, sanction.

But the objection to the pledge which the King demanded is still unanswered, and yet it is easily invalidated. Because the late Ministers were justified in rejecting it, it by no means follows that his Majesty was *not* justified in requiring it. On the point at issue, he had fully and deliberately made up his mind. It was not a new question: it was one on which

* If the King could prevent a bill from being introduced into Parliament, or if, when introduced, he could arrest its progress, Parliament would certainly be a nonentity. If, on the other hand, the King had not the power of dismissing his ministers, but was under the necessity of allowing them, whenever they thought fit, to introduce and support in Parliament, in their official capacity, measures which trenched on his rights; or, in other words, if he was bound to lend the countenance of the crown in support of measures which were injurious to the crown; and to employ the royal authority to defeat the royal wish, would not he be reduced to the same forlorn state?

he had reflected for years ; on which he had come to a determination from which he was firmly resolved never to swerve. Every act of his life had proved him the father of his people, and his benignant mind had induced him to extend, to all ranks and descriptions of his subjects, the blessings of a free constitution. Towards the Irish Roman Catholics he had shewn peculiar favour ; and had restored them to all those civil rights, which it had been the policy of former reigns to curtail. But it appeared to him that, whatever might be his inclination, his coronation oath directly militated against much further indulgence. This opinion, which he had early formed, had been fortified by habit and reflection ; and to his scruples on this point, he had, some years ago, given up the strongest and most able administration, with which this country was ever blessed. It was not then to be imagined, that his consent could be fairly obtained, when the motives for yielding were so much weakened. It was the conviction of this natural conclusion, which induced the late Ministers to have recourse to stra-

tagem, and it was the timely discovery of this stratagem, in conjunction with the stipulations which they afterwards insisted on, which suggested to the King the necessity of a written pledge, that he might not again be rendered liable to a similar affront.

That the Ministers then acted right, in refusing to sign the pledge, I do not deny ; but I also insist, that the King, after what had passed, was justified in demanding it. The question had entirely originated with them : they were the sole cause of the mischief which ensued. They had, without any provocation, brought themselves into the dilemma, and it was no more than just that they should pay the penalty of their rashness. The charge, therefore, which, without much observance either of temper or decorum, has been brought against the King, that he has, in this instance, made an improper and dangerous use of his prerogative, is completely repelled ; nor can I conceive the propriety, or utility, of having agitated in Parliament a question on which, in the abstract, all men are agreed. The King has been blam-

ed; but, in my opinion, most wrongfully, and most unconstitutionally. He was compelled to exercise his judgment, and he has indisputably exercised it within the limits of his prerogative. Is he not, by the constitution of his country, invested with the power of appointing and dismissing, at pleasure, the confidential servants of the Crown? When they become his Ministers, they are, by oath, bound to consult with him, and to give him honest advice, on all measures which concern the executive branch of the Government. Previously to the introduction of every new law, or of any alteration in the existing laws, it is their duty to advise with him; to ascertain his sentiments; and to be certain of his consent. They originate the measures in which the Crown is concerned; and whatever they introduce to the deliberation of Parliament, is supposed to have received the Royal approbation. As long as the King reposes confidence in the zeal, the talents, and the integrity of his Ministers, he is naturally influenced, and, in a great degree, governed by their counsels. Points, however,

may easily arise, in which there may be a difference of opinion between the King and his Ministers. If this difference cannot be accommodated to the satisfaction of the parties; if the King refuses to yield, and the Ministers cannot conscientiously alter their sentiments; an irreconcilable schism, from that moment, takes place, and it is their duty to resign. This is unquestionably the spirit of our laws. If they would bear any other interpretation, the government of the country could not possibly be carried on. If the King were, *à priori*, bound to yield to every measure suggested by his Ministers, it would depend on any set of factious men, who had forced themselves into power, to strip him entirely of his prerogatives. If both parties were bound to resist, and the King were deprived of the power of terminating this resistance by the dismissal of his Ministers; the King, his Ministers, and his Parliament, might be continually at variance, and a constant interference of the Royal negative would be the consequence. There must, then, be an understanding between them. In the present instance, that

understanding has been interrupted by the hasty, misguided, illiberal, and improvident conduct of the late Ministry. They were, a few weeks ago, at the height of their ambition, at the height of that ambition which is most gratifying to the pride of an elevated mind. They were a powerful administration, ruling an immense empire, at one of the most eventful and interesting crises that the world ever knew. They were furnished with the means of perpetuating their own fame, by extending and confirming the glory of their country, and by conferring endless blessings on the race of man. They were apparently so strongly linked together; they had so firmly cemented their power; that the Opposition, which watched their measures, had resigned all hopes of supplanting them. Many of them were men of great and acknowledged talents; and from the circumstance of Lord Grenville being at their head, a nobleman of distinguished abilities, and who was additionally respected as the former friend and colleague of the illustrious Pitt, they possessed, in a considerable degree, the confidence

of the country. Although they had, since their accession to power, in some measure created disgust, and weakened their strength, by an arrogant assumption of superiority to other men ; and although their acts had neither fulfilled their promises, nor justified their pretensions, still the nation approved of them, and suppressed their dissatisfaction at what had passed in their expectation of what was to come. They knew that they had talents, which it was their interest to exert ; and they therefore had a right to suppose, that the sterility of the present, would be compensated by the abundance of a future, harvest. Under such circumstances, under circumstances so gratifying to honest pride and to laudable ambition, what could induce men so situated, thus unprofitably and unnecessarily to encounter the risk, nay, the certainty, of dismissal ? Their sudden dissolution has been entirely a work of their own.*

* The discreet and peaceable demeanour of the Irish Roman Catholics, since the agitation of this business, is a proof that the measure was *not of indispensable necessity* ; and is a further proof that they join with the rest of his Majesty's subjects, in thinking that his Majesty has been most unworthily treated, and in condemning the arrogance of his late Ministers.

The effects of a change, at such a juncture, was, in many respects, highly detrimental to the public service. If it had only been from the confusion in arrangements, and the loss of time, the inconvenience was serious; and, under other circumstances, the country would have given them their support. But in this instance a contest has arisen between the King and his Ministers: the King is right, and his Ministers are wrong: and in supporting the King, our reason, our duty, and our wishes, are fortunately coincident. Our late Ministers have, to use a vulgar proverb, as one of their witty associates observed, not only knocked their heads against the wall, but they have been at the trouble of building a wall for that express purpose. Whatever inconvenience, therefore, the nation may suffer from the loss of time, the suspension of public business, the change of plans, or the dissolution of Parliament, they are the defaulters. It is all to be ascribed to their rashness. Their conduct, on this occasion, has, in fact, revealed a plan of ungenerous intrigue, and of secret machination, which must nearly ex-

tinguish our regret for their loss. It is a kind of earnest how little the nation had, in reality, to expect ; and how grievously their hopes would, in all probability, have been disappointed.*

Whilst Mr. Fox lived, much reliance was no doubt to be placed on the superiority of his understanding. Still, the violence of his former political principles, and his strong inclinations to a revolutionary peace, detracted, unavoidably, from public confidence. When, on Mr. Fox's death, Lord Grenville became the effective leader, notwithstanding the sincere regret with which all ranks contemplated the loss of a luminary, which had blazed for so many years, which had attracted the admiration, and

* With how much more dignity would Lord Grenville and Lord Howick have acted, if, on withdrawing from office, they had followed Mr. Pitt's example in 1801 ; and if they had allowed people to form their own conjectures, without bringing the affair before Parliament, and pleading their cause against their Sovereign. Their request to the King to reveal the secrets of the Cabinet, which they, by oath, are bound *not* to reveal, is unprecedented ; and the use which they made of the King's indulgence was as ungenerous as unconstitutional. One party being evidently wrong, their endeavour to justify themselves must have been at the King's expense.

excited the astonishment of the civilized world, we felt our security increased. We were, at least, no longer fearful that the interests of the country would be injured by an impolitic and premature desire of repose. We beheld, in Lord Grenville, an experienced and an enlightened statesman, a disciple of the old school, which had so long shewn a determined enmity to French innovations, and had so long maintained the dignity and honour of the empire. We knew that he had always, in this respect, thought as a Briton ; and we hoped that the ascendancy of his genius would know how to controul and direct the subordinate talents of his associates. It is therefore doubly to be lamented, that any thing should have happened at this exigent moment, at this crisis of human affairs, to deprive the nation of his talents, and to remove him from that eminent situation which he so well knows how to fill. The loss of Lord Grenville is, however, the only loss which the country will have to regret. With his solitary exception, the different departments of

the state are as ably, and, I trust, as *honestly* filled.* The other leading members of the late administration were not men peculiarly adapted to office. Most of Mr. Fox's old adherents had been tutored in a wrong school. They were skilful debaters, and useful to him in his system of attack. But they shared his faults, which were congenial to the inferiority of their minds, without partaking of his excellencies, which were derived from the transcendency of his own. They were, like him, whilst in opposition, violent, and sometimes even factious, in their proceedings. They were, like him, spouters at the Whig Club, as well as debaters in Parliament. They were, like him, the advocates of all kinds of reform, and ad-

* Even with Lord Grenville's talents, to assist and direct them, little was done, during their administration of public affairs. As we have seen, there was no dispatch of business; no attention paid to the commercial interests of the country; our military and naval force was rendered useless or misapplied; and, as to their economy, it was little more than a pretence to persuade Parliament to create commissioners, that they might be better able to provide for their friends. I believe it is a fact, that not one of them was even present at an appeal cause, in the whole duration of their ministry.

mirers of the French revolution. But they did not, like him, know how to resign former principles, how to abandon former errors : nor was the nation disposed to offer to them the tribute which it voluntarily paid to the sublime genius of that extraordinary man.

One and all, however, on their accession to power, totally reversed their former opinions, and the nation was glad to pardon the inconsistency, by contemplating the usefulness, of their conduct. The oppression of the subject was no longer a watch-word ; Parliamentary reform was altogether scouted : the plans of the illustrious Pitt were generally adopted ; and the Duke of Norfolk, who had been reinstated at the Privy Council, and was on the look-out for a blue ribbon,* no

* The history of the loss, to the late administration, of the two vacant blue ribbons, is a very curious one. When the first fell, the Duke of Norfolk and Earl Fitzwilliam both put in a claim for it. After some hesitation, the Duke of Norfolk consented to yield to Lord Fitzwilliam, as the representative of the Rockingham family. Lord Fitzwilliam was on the point of receiving it, when a third claim was put in by a very distinguished personage, for the Earl of Moira. To him Lord Fitzwilliam would have yielded, but the Duke would not. It was there-

longer thought it became the dignity of his rank, to propose from the chair at the Crown and Anchor dinners, as a patriotic toast, the *Majesty of the People*. Such was the atonement which they penitently made for past transgressions ! Their ministerial conduct naturally awakened the susceptibility of their former partizans, and they were held up by that triumvirate of virtuous patriots and consummate politicians, Sir Francis Burdett, Mr. Cobbet, and Mr. Paull, as the vilest of apostates. They had, indeed, completely unmasked their real sentiments ; and they have had an ample opportunity of announcing to the world, how ardently they coveted the possession of power, and how detrimentally they could apply its use. How they may be received by old friends, now that their power is forfeited ; now that they are reduced to their former level, and are compelled to mingle with the vulgar im-

fore agreed to wait. Another fell, but there were still three to satisfy, and it was difficult to settle which should be disappointed. It was therefore determined to wait for a third ; but before a *third* fell, the administration was changed, and the two which they were already in possession of, were lost.

potency of the multitude, must chiefly depend on themselves. Those, however, who herd together, merely from motives of ambition and party views, are easily pacified in their resentments. They make ready allowances for the frailty of human nature. They view things through the palliating medium of christian charity ; past offences are easily forgiven ; and old attachments are easily revived. Thus they may again be as clamorous on the popular side, as they were lately strenuous in an opposite direction. The stream may continue to run with the same violence, although in a contrary course. After however what has past, the Whig Club can never again be looked up to, by any description of people, with respect. It had been made, by the late ministers, a ladder of ambition, which, the moment their object was obtained, was kicked with contempt from under them. It degenerated into an assembly of ranting ruffians, among whom these titled and official gentlemen were ashamed to be seen. There has indeed been throughout, even when it was in its zenith, a strange inconsistency in the

leaders of this once formidable club ; and, on what principles they, who declared that it was founded in order to support and maintain inviolate, the principles of that glorious revolution, which placed William the Third on the throne, and secured the succession to a Protestant race of princes, could ever become the advocates of Catholic emancipation, remains to be explained.

I shall now very shortly release both the reader and myself. I have but few points more to notice, and on those I shall be very brief. It has been attempted by the late administration to throw all the odium which attaches to the late political revolution, and even the consequences of their own ministerial acts, on the responsibility of their successors in office. With what motive, it is easy to discern ; but with what reason or justice, it is difficult to conceive. The responsibility of the measures which were concerted, and carried into effect, whilst they were in power, must certainly belong to them ; and, as their dismissal was the unavoidable consequence of their own misconduct, they must

also be answerable for whatever immediate inconvenience may arise out of it. The new ministers were unknown to the constitution till the seals of office were delivered into their custody ; and the interval which elapsed between the dismissal of their predecessors and their appointment, the King was without advisers. It would be a monstrous proposition to assert, that they could be made accountable for the result of measures, in the framing of which they had no participation. That the King has a right to appoint and dismiss his ministers, as he thinks fit, can never be denied ; that the cause of the late dismissal was sufficiently cogent, I think I have fully proved. As affairs have thus been brought into the present state ; as the late ministers have been necessarily dismissed ; and as there was no remedy to the evil but the appointment of another set of men, we must hope that, in these times, when a strong and efficient government is so essential, that they will receive the firm and gratuitous support of their country. The late ministers have accused the present ministers of having, if not by a

written engagement, at least by a tacit admission, given the pledge which they refused to give. My answer to this accusation is: prove it. Why should it be necessary that such a pledge should be given or required. All the leading men of the present government are known to entertain the same sentiments as the King, respecting the catholic question. They have always deprecated its agitation, and opposed its progress. Why then cannot they as conscientiously enter upon the administration of public affairs as the late ministers assert they have quitted them. I indeed am inclined to believe, that they would act more against their conscience, in bringing the measure forward, than the late ministers acted in obedience to their conscience, in refusing to abandon it. The late ministers have in fact proved, that they were not quite so scrupulous as they would have us imagine. If they thought that their duty absolutely prescribed the recommendation of certain additional privileges to the Catholics; if they conceived that the measure was of so pressing and indispensable a nature, that

the delay of a single day was hazardous ; how came it that they were afterwards willing to compromise it, and that they finally withdrew it altogether? The demand of the pledge was the only obstacle which they could not get over. Here then was an evident dereliction of duty, an evident departure from the conscientious interpretation of their oath, according to their own explanation. If the reason for granting concessions to the extent stated, at this particular moment, were so very urgent, that, according to their notions, the tranquillity of Ireland, and, in some degree, the safety of the empire depended on them, why were they to be prevailed on to relinquish them at all? The reason is too evident to require a statement. As, therefore, his Majesty has been compelled, from the circumstances which have occurred, to change his late advisers, he is, in his exertions to form a new ministry answerable to the demand of the times, entitled to the zealous support of every friend to his country.

One word more and I have done. The late ministers finding, notwithstanding

their dismissal from office, that they are supported by a very formidable number of adherents, in a Parliament which they convened, and in which they contrived to introduce so many steady friends, have, of course, strong objections to its dissolution. They think, that as long as the present Parliament exists, if their strength is not sufficient to force themselves back upon the King, it is sufficient very much to embarrass and obstruct, and consequently to render less efficacious, the measures of their successors. They accordingly reprobate, in the severest terms, any such insinuation. They say, that after an appeal to the people so recently made, it will be little less than *diabolical*, to send the members back to their constituents. But why are they so fearful of this appeal? If they have justified themselves in the eyes of the nation; if the nation applauds their conduct in the late struggle, as they would have us believe; it would be a joyful tidings for them, as their ranks would be considerably increased. But, knowing that the very reverse is the case, they dread the consequences. And why should not the King, if he finds

it necessary for the support of his government, resort to this exertion of his prerogative? Were the late Ministers so very delicate in giving their advice on this subject? Or did they, out of tenderness to the interests of the country, or from a reluctance to avoid the confusion of a general election, hesitate? Yet they selected a moment, at which it was quite unnecessary, and at which the measure must have been resorted to, merely for the sake of getting rid of a few opponents, and of introducing a few friends. In the old Parliament they had a decided majority, and the opposition which was moderate had neither chance nor hope of displacing them. Still, when it was dissolved, did they not exert every authority and influence of office, to procure a new one still more obedient to their wishes? The counties of Hants, Norfolk and Northampton, and even Westminster, can particularly speak to the fact.

Are then the present Ministers, when the reasons for offering the same advice to their Sovereign, are so much more cogent, to be fearful of giving it? Is the King to

deliver up the reins of government, without first collecting the sense of the nation, to a set of men who have treated him so unbecomingly ; who have so grossly abused his confidence ; and who have rendered themselves so personally obnoxious ? Is he to submit to that tyranny which they endeavoured to exercise over him, without making an effort for deliverance, by resorting to the exercise of an undoubted prerogative ? Nor will this fresh appeal to his people be ineffectually preferred, to a people who have, for so many years, experienced his paternal care ; and who must be aware, how necessary it is, to the existence of the constitution, to support the rights of the Crown against the encroachments of ambitious Ministers. Had the late Ministers succeeded in their design to force the King to obedience, future resistance to increasing claims might have been useless, and whatever George the Third might have continued *de jure*, they would have held the supreme authority *de facto*. Such being the hazards, it is not likely that the King's subjects will shew any inclination to countenance such an unconstitutional

assumption of power ; or that they will return men as their representatives, who will be desirous of forcing back the late servants of the Crown. If a majority of such men are returned, it will at least be a declaration, that the many strong guards which our ancestors thought necessary for the defence of our rights and the security of the Protestant succession, were uselessly placed, and that we should now remove them in favour of the Catholics. It will be a declaration of a wish to render the independence of the Crown submissive to ministerial influence and authority. It will also be a declaration, that we consider it for the benefit of the state, and congenial to the spirit of our laws, that the Ministers should be *every thing*, and the King *nothing* : that the King should be satisfied with the outward splendour and trappings of royalty ; but that all the intrinsic power and patronage of the monarchy should be confided to half a dozen of his subjects. But no such feelings as these do, nor ever can, prevail. Our interests, our inclinations, and our duty, attach us to the just prerogatives of the Crown, in defending

which we must be convinced that we are supporting the purity of the constitution. It is not, therefore, to be imagined, that we shall desert our King, in favour of our late Ministers. This would not only be an act of the basest ingratitude, but it would be treasonable to our laws, and fatal to our liberties. Our love and attachment to our present monarch is indeed no fickle sentiment. It is derived from the happy experience of near fifty years of a beneficent and patriotic reign, during which he has not only been seated on the throne of his ancestors, but has dwelt in the affections of his people; and, whatever a few factious men may imagine, we shall never shew an inclination to transfer our allegiance to the house of Grenville, from the house of Brunswick.

THE END.

OBSERVATIONS,

&c. &c. &c.

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